Communities Strengthened Through Partnership

Guidelines
2004

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Regional Partnerships Initiative Guidelines

INTRODUCTION

Alberta Municipal Affairs introduced the Regional Partnerships Initiative in 1999 as a means of fostering regional cooperation and strengthening Alberta by helping municipalities explore and develop partnerships that benefit their operations and residents, as well as business and industry. The expectation, at the initiative's inception, was that cooperation would promote innovation, sustainability and cost savings. Between 1999 and 2003 the Regional Partnerships Initiative provided total funding of approximately $2.9 million to 23 partnerships that represent 93 percent of Alberta's population.

The **Regional Partnerships Initiative** underwent a review in 2003 with the objectives of:

- clarifying the **strategic direction** for the initiative;
- furthering the **Regional Partnerships Initiative** as a vehicle that supports municipal and provincial interests through the development of **sustainable partnerships**; and
- establishing **parameters** to clarify the distinction between the exploration and implementation stages of the initiative.

The **Regional Partnerships Initiative Guidelines** have been developed based on the experiences gained since 1999 in working with the 23 funded partnerships, as well as through consultation with a broad cross section of elected and administrative officials involved in funded and emerging regional partnerships across the province, ministry representatives, and other sources of feedback.

The key principles of this initiative are as follows:

1. The Regional Partnerships Initiative provides grant funding to promote and facilitate **regional cooperation** between Alberta's municipalities.

2. The Regional Partnerships Initiative Guidelines include a **framework to guide municipalities** through the process of developing regional partnerships.

3. The Regional Partnerships Initiative is available to **all municipalities** in Alberta.

4. The Regional Partnerships Initiative **respects municipal autonomy** for local service delivery decision making.

5. The Regional Partnerships Initiative **facilitates the sharing of innovative ideas** and **best practices** learned from regional projects.

If you have any questions or require further information about the Regional Partnerships Initiative, please contact:

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1. PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1.1 Vision

Alberta Municipal Affairs' goal for the Regional Partnerships Initiative is to provide assistance to **promote** and **support community readiness** and **sustainability** for Alberta municipalities. With this goal in mind, the vision for the Regional Partnerships Initiative is:

Communities strengthened through partnership.

1.2 What are the Benefits of Regional Partnerships?

Regional partnership grant activities to date demonstrate that **local** priorities are often best addressed by **local** decision makers through **regional** action. Some regional partnerships address issues that are based on a shared geography (e.g., three communities that share municipal boundaries). Other regional partnerships represent a collection of municipalities who come together to pursue mutual interests (e.g., activities that may increase knowledge, training, service or infrastructure sharing across municipalities while reducing costs to individual communities). The Regional Partnerships Initiative is designed to help strengthen local communities by encouraging innovative partnerships that enhance local service delivery and reduce costs for Albertans. The Regional Partnerships Initiative contributes to AMA's business plan goal by supporting municipalities to:

Share service delivery – Municipalities working together to deliver key local services often results in enhanced service delivery for Alberta residents, businesses and industries.

Expand cost-effective services – When applied properly to specific types of services, collaborative approaches can take advantage of economies of scale or scope and reduce per-unit service delivery costs. Cost savings for municipalities and their ratepayers can result. These cost savings, in turn, help to promote the *Alberta Advantage*.

Develop regional forums – Regional Partnerships Initiative participants indicate that the forums for discussing regional interests and issues offer significant benefits, particularly in developing innovative approaches. Alberta Municipal Affairs encourages initiation and development of these regional discussion forums.

Focus on regions – No municipality in Alberta is an island unto itself. Economic and social activity are increasingly regional, rather than local. The ability of municipalities within a region to collaborate to meet regional economic and social needs leads to stronger regions and, ultimately, a stronger province.

Strengthen municipalities – Cooperation and collaboration with neighbouring local governments can result in more efficient, effective and innovative municipalities.

Efficiency, effectiveness and innovation serve, in turn, to enhance municipalities' vitality and autonomy.

Improve quality of life – The effective use of partnerships to leverage resources, spread innovative ideas, expand service choices and lower costs promotes an improved quality of life in communities. Quality of life is an important, if not critical, consideration in the location decisions of residents and businesses.

Plan for growth – The specific challenges presented by changes, including ongoing population changes, are often best accommodated through cooperative approaches to service provision and infrastructure development.

The regional partnerships established to date have demonstrated that there are a number of economic, social, environmental, and quality of life benefits associated with regional approaches to service delivery.

1.3 What is the Process Involved to Initiate and Develop a Regional Partnership?

The **partnership development process** tends to consist of **four key stages**:

1. Opportunity

In the first stage of the partnership development process, prospective municipal partners meet (e.g., through joint council meetings or in other similar forums) to determine if there is support for the idea of working together. Usually, the parties will come together to discuss a **particular opportunity** that they have identified as suitable for pursuing through a shared working venture such as a regional partnership. In some cases, however, the parties may not have identified a particular opportunity and will arrange to meet to hold a visioning session or other similar discussion forum, then identify **possible partnering opportunities** that they could explore together. In these situations, municipalities often meet individually prior to the discussion forum to determine their respective self-interests in pursuing a regional partnership. The discussion forum serves as a platform to identify commonalities in the respective self-interests – thereby potentially determining solid regional partnership activities supportable by each municipality at the table. Various deliverables may emerge from this first stage, including:

- an agreement to proceed in developing a particular partnership around a specific opportunity or set of opportunities;
- an agreement to undertake the necessary preliminary studies to explore the feasibility of specific partnering ideas; and
- a resolution that commits the parties to the concept of delivering services through partnerships, and that places the parties "on the lookout" for opportunities that may arise in the future.

2. Parameters

Once prospective partners have agreed to develop a partnership around a specific opportunity or set of opportunities, the partners need to begin defining the **partnership's parameters and scope**. Discussions need to be initiated in order to explore:

- the preferred scope of the shared service (e.g., an entire recreation function, including facilities, programs and parks; or a single aquatic centre);
- the most appropriate governance model for the service (e.g., commission or a non-profit society);
- the most appropriate delivery model for the service (e.g., delivery through one municipality or delivery through a new agency); and
- an equitable system for sharing costs related to the service (e.g., on the basis of population or on the basis of assessment).

In addressing each of these considerations, prospective partners may undertake (and/or contract consultants) to undertake studies to identify and assess options.

Typically, after the completion of the **Opportunity** and **Parameters** stages of the partnership development process, the municipal partners have two choices with respect to the projects they are exploring:

1. If the project is deemed to provide value to the municipal partners and their constituents, the partnership would move forward to the **Groundwork** laying stage of the partnership development process.

2. If the project does not provide enough value to the partnership's members, the partnership would decide to cease exploration of the specific project or concept. This is not to say that the partnership may not move other value creating propositions forward; instead, they would simply cease exploration of those options that do not provide a solid case for implementation.

In cases where the regional partnership determines that ceasing the exploration of a specific option or activity is the best course of action, Alberta Municipal Affairs requires documentation within the context of the partnership's final project reports outlining the activity or concept and indicating the reasons why the partnership has determined that ceasing exploration is the best approach. This information will be used in the future to develop best practices and case studies designed to assist municipalities throughout the province in the development of regional partnerships.

3. Groundwork

At the third stage of the development process, the partners undertake the **preparations necessary to implement** their chosen arrangement. For example:

- bylaws to establish the service may have to be adopted by the participating municipalities;
- voter approval may have to be obtained in one or more of the participating municipalities;
- communications programs and materials may have to be developed to explain key changes to the communities involved;
- the chosen governance body and delivery body may have to be established; and
- staffing, systems, procedures, contracts and other administrative matters may have to be arranged or re-arranged.

4. Delivery

Once the groundwork has been laid, the service partnership is ready to begin delivering the service. The types of activities that occur at this stage will depend on the type of service being provided and the specific type of arrangement developed. A new recreation partnership developed to build a regional aquatic centre may issue a request for proposals for a facility plan. A new regional transit service initiated to both broaden service and reduce per-unit service costs may initiate a needs survey of its users, or begin negotiations to amalgamate separate collective agreements. A new regional water utility may develop concept plans, a feasibility study, or an implementation plan for service delivery.

Figure 1 illustrates the basic **four-stage partnership development process**. The Regional Partnerships Initiative is tailored to encourage and assist municipalities at any or all of the stages in the development process.

Figure 1
Partnership Development Process

Stage 1 Opportunity	Stage 2 Parameters	Stage 3 Groundwork	Stage 4 Delivery
- meet to gauge support for working together - discuss specific opportunity or identify opportunities	- negotiate and establish parameters for service partnership - parameters include: scope, governance, delivery, cost-sharing	- lay groundwork necessary for partnership to function - may need to: set up systems; create a governance body; obtain voter approval; undertake an information program; etc.	- ready to begin functioning (i.e., delivering the service) - may begin work by: commissioning plans; completing designs; undertaking surveys; developing design and/or concept plans, etc.

The **exploration** and **implementation** grants available to regional partnerships through the Regional Partnerships Initiative are generally aligned with the partnership development process outlined in Figure 1. Stage 1 and 2 activities are normally funded through exploration grants and Stage 3 and 4 activities through implementation grants. Specific details associated with exploration and implementation grants are included in Sections 2, 4 and 5.

2. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

The following general guidelines apply to all applications for Regional Partnerships Initiative grant funding. Alberta Municipal Affairs reserves the right to modify the guideline requirements to suit special circumstances. The actual level of funding awarded will depend on the need of the municipality, the merit and usefulness of the activities, and the quality of the application (including the planning involved).

2.1 Is Your Municipality Eligible?

Any city, town, village, summer village, specialized municipality, municipal district, improvement district, special area, or Metis settlement is eligible to participate in the

Regional Partnerships Initiative. Eligibility is further defined in Sections 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 2.6, and 2.8 of these Guidelines.

If you have received an application form, **do not fill it in if**:

- your partnership has an eligible population under 500; or
- your municipality is participating in but is not the managing partner.

In the first case, your partnership is **ineligible**. In the second, the partner municipality that is **managing** the project should submit the grant application for the project.

Please be advised that municipalities will be ineligible to participate in the Regional Partnerships Initiative if they have not complied with the terms and conditions of the Conditional Grant Agreement for any grant administered by Alberta Municipal Affairs.

2.2 Which Application Form Should You Use?

There are **two** initiative application forms:

- If your partnership is at the initiation and early development stages, use the **Exploration Grant** Application Form.
- If your partnership has explored a broad range of partnering opportunities and you are ready to undertake further development of one or more partnership activities, use the **Implementation Grant** Application Form.

Complete a separate application for each of the above phases, and note that the exploration activities need to be completed before an implementation application can be submitted.

The additional information required for exploration and implementation applications is outlined in Part 3 of the Exploration and Implementation Application Forms and discussed in Section 3 of these Guidelines.

2.3 How is Grant Funding Eligibility Calculated?

The grant funding amount is related to the partnership's **eligible population**. The **eligible population** is the sum of the populations of the eligible municipalities participating in a regional partnership. The population figures used will be the figures specified in the most recent Official Population List issued by Alberta Municipal Affairs.

2.4 Exploration Grant Funding Opportunities

The level of funding available to municipalities in the exploration phase, based on the partnership's eligible population in accordance with Section 2.3 of the Guidelines, is as follows:

- partnerships with total eligible populations **under 500 are not eligible**;
- partnerships with a total eligible population **between 500 and 2,500** are eligible to receive an exploration grant of **up to $25,000**;

- partnerships with a total eligible population **between 2,501 and 10,000** are eligible to receive an exploration grant of **up to $50,000**;

- partnerships with a total eligible population **over 10,000** are eligible to receive an exploration grant of **up to $75,000**; and

- metropolitan areas are eligible to receive a larger amount depending on the significance of the activities under consideration.

A metropolitan area is deemed to be any area that is identified as a Census Metropolitan Area (CMA) by Statistics Canada. At this time, Alberta's census metropolitan areas (with populations over 100,000) are the Greater Calgary and Greater Edmonton regions.

2.5 Implementation Grant Funding Opportunities

The level of funding available to municipalities in the implementation phase, based on the partnership's eligible population in accordance with Section 2.3 of the Guidelines, is as follows:

- partnerships with total eligible populations **under 500 are not eligible**;

- partnerships with a total eligible population **between 500 and 2,500** are eligible to receive an implementation grant of **up to $50,000**;

- partnerships with a total eligible population **between 2,501 and 10,000** are eligible to receive an implementation grant of **up to $100,000**;

- partnerships with a total eligible population **over 10,000** are eligible to receive an implementation grant of **up to $150,000**; and

- metropolitan areas are eligible to receive a larger amount depending on the significance of the projects under consideration.

A metropolitan area is any area that is identified as a Census Metropolitan Area by Statistics Canada. At this time, Alberta's census metropolitan areas (with populations over 100,000) are the Greater Calgary and Greater Edmonton regions.

2.6 How Many Partnerships Can a Municipality Participate In?

All municipalities may participate as eligible participants in **two concurrent** regional partnerships. This means that a municipality's population may be counted for grant funding purposes in two partnerships at any one time. Once a partnership fulfils all of the terms and conditions of the Conditional Grant Agreement governing its partnership grant the partnership is considered complete and each of the member municipalities are again eligible for funding for another partnership.

The exception to this is where a municipality is involved in one partnership that has completed its exploration grant, but the partnership has not yet finalized the compliance and reporting requirements. Municipalities may proceed to work on the development of the partnership's next phase in preparation for submitting an implementation grant application. Work or costs incurred during the pre-implementation would not be eligible implementation grant activities. However, this transition from exploration to implementation would be treated as one continuous partnership. During this period, municipalities would continue to be eligible to participate in one other partnership.

Municipalities may, however, participate in more than two regional partnerships as long as they recognize that their populations will not be included in the funding calculations for additional partnerships.

The key reason for this restriction is the initiatives limited budget and the intent to equitably distribute the dollars across the province. As well, municipalities are encouraged to move along the partnership development process continuum from exploration to implementation, where a regional solution has merit. Use of municipal resources in more than two concurrent partnerships may lead to overextension and loss of funds.

2.7 Can Sub-partnerships Obtain Grant Funding?

A partnership sub-group, or smaller sub-partnerships, may evolve from large regional partnerships. However, separate sub-partnership applications will not necessarily be accepted for funding.

Application activities from sub-partnerships must not overlap or duplicate the exploration or implementation activities of the larger partnership. Where it appears that sub-partnership application activities duplicate activities undertaken by the larger partnership, Municipal Affairs will consult with both partnerships to ensure there is no duplication of activities.

Note: Where several or multiple sub-partnerships derive from a previously funded larger partnership, additional or special reviews regarding eligibility of partnerships or activities may be required prior to the application being accepted for consideration. Contact a Municipal Affairs Policy and Special Grants representative from the Municipal Services Branch at (780) 427-2225 to obtain further information.

2.8 *Who can Serve as the Managing Partner?*

All applications for exploration and implementation grant funding must be submitted by a **municipal managing partner**. The municipal managing partner is responsible for managing the project, a process which includes:

- preparing and submitting a grant application,
- entering into a Conditional Grant Agreement,
- receiving and accounting for the funding; and
- reporting to partnership participants and the Province on behalf of the partnership.

Regional partnerships are encouraged to appoint a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or another manager from a participating municipality as the authorized signatory for the municipal managing partner.

As an exception to the above, those partnerships that have already received exploration grant funding through the leadership of a non-municipal managing partner (e.g., a regional economic development alliance) will be permitted to pursue implementation activities that directly result from completed exploration grant activities under the same leadership arrangements. However, subsequent applications for new exploration or implementation activities by these groups will need to be submitted by a municipal managing partner.

2.9 *Three Partner Minimum*

Partnerships are required to meet program requirements and must have a minimum of **three municipal partners** to be eligible to apply for grant funding.

2.10 *Suggested Shared Services*

When the Regional Partnerships Initiative was initially developed, many of the funded partnerships focused their activities primarily around economic development initiatives. Municipalities are now strongly encouraged to **explore regional shared services and delivery** as well as economic development initiatives under all future Regional Partnerships Initiative activities. New applications will require a significant regional shared service component as part of the partnerships' exploration and implementation activities.

Alberta Municipal Affairs encourages municipalities submitting Regional Partnerships Initiative grant applications to consider opportunities related to the following regional shared services:

- Water treatment, transmission and distribution
- Sanitary sewage collection, transmission and treatment
- Stormwater management
- Solid waste management
- Garbage collection and/or recycling
- Land use planning

- Road maintenance
- Infrastructure management
- Bylaw enforcement
- Administration/governance
- Policing
- Fire and emergency services
- Recreation
- Economic development
- Property assessment
- Affordable and seniors housing
- Permits, inspections, etc.
- High speed data transmission

It is important to note that the list provided above is not all inclusive. Rather, it is simply a guide to promote discussion of potential regional opportunities. Services other than those noted above may also be eligible for grant funding.

2.11 Municipal For-Profit Corporations

Grants may be provided to support regional partnerships exploring governance or shared service models, and specifically the need for enhanced service provision and the mechanisms for effective service delivery. Grants are not available for any aspects of partnerships related to the establishment of a for-profit municipally controlled corporation where the newly formed for-profit corporation could compete with private industry.

2.12 Project Timeframes

Activities and projects undertaken through the use of grant funding are to be completed based on the following timelines:

- All **exploration grant activities** should be completed within **two years** of the Minister signing the Conditional Grant Agreement.

- All **implementation grant activities** should be completed within **three years** of the Minister signing the Conditional Grant Agreement.

Alberta Municipal Affairs reserves the right to extend the above timeframes based on demonstrated need, where this is supported by a written submission detailing the need for an extension from the managing partner of the regional partnership.

Non-compliance in completing projects in a timely manner may result in a request for the regional partnership to repay all or a portion of the grant.

2.13 Funding Restrictions

The following funding restrictions apply:

- No grant funds may be used as a contribution towards the municipal cost-sharing component of any provincial-municipal cost-shared program or project;
- No grant funds may be used to pay for work completed or materials obtained before the Conditional Grant Agreement is signed by the Minister.

The **managing partner** must be prepared to enter into a Conditional Grant Agreement with the Province if the application is approved. Conditional Grant Agreement requirements are discussed in Section 6 of the Guidelines.

2.14 Administrative Costs

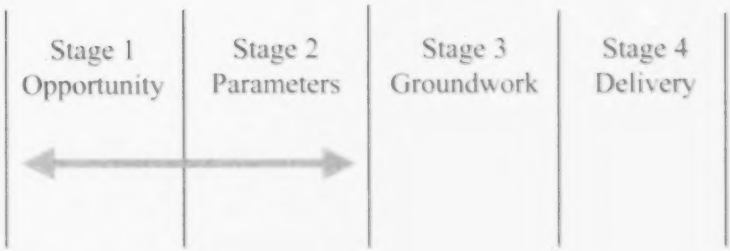
Many of the regional partnerships established to date have incurred some administrative costs. Staff costs (e.g., councillor honoraria, the municipal administrator's salary and benefits, staff time, etc.) represent an in-kind investment by the partnership, and reimbursement of in-house costs will not be included in grant funding requests. However, Alberta Municipal Affairs will consider applications that contain limited administrative costs for start-up items such as computers, desks, chairs, etc., that may be required to establish an office for the partnership's administration.

3. EXPLORATION GRANTS

3.1 When Should a Municipal Partnership Apply for an Exploration Grant?

Exploration grants are available to municipalities to **explore** opportunities that may be suitable for follow-up through the establishment of a regional partnership. Exploration grants are typically considered for activities that occur during Stage 1 and/or Stage 2 of a partnership development process.

Figure 2
Exploration Grant Activities
Partnership Development Stages



Exploration grants support activities that encourage municipalities to get together to consider the merits of regional partnerships, to explore opportunities, to determine what is feasible, and to define the parameters of potential partnerships. Typically, activities might include:

- the creation of a presentation and/or discussion paper on regional partnerships and the benefits they can provide;
- a facilitated workshop designed to discuss the concept of regional partnerships, and/or to identify possible opportunities for collaboration to deliver regional services;
- a "baseline study" designed to provide the partners with a clear understanding or an inventory of the service delivery measures and assets already in place;
- a facilitated visioning session designed to help participants collectively determine expectations and outcomes for the regional service around which the partnership is being formed;
- a governance options analysis that identifies various governance models and assesses them against key criteria such as equity, representation, and political acceptability;
- a review of cost-sharing models that can be applied in recovering the tax supported portion of the costs of a service;
- a service delivery study designed to identify and assess various delivery models, some of which may involve non-government participants; and
- a public consultation process to raise awareness of regional services and receive feedback on any specific needs or concerns that may be identified.

Exploration funding could also be used to hire an independent facilitator or a process manager who is not already a staff member (see Section 2.14 of the Guidelines), to assist the regional partnership's steering committee (comprised of administrative and elected representatives from the various partners) in overseeing, and applying the results of, the various studies and analyses.

At the exploration stage, partnerships are typically exploring a **broad range** of opportunities or activities. These opportunities will not all necessarily lead to implementation of some or all of the opportunities. In some cases, none of the explored opportunities may result in implementation. Partnerships are expected to include in the recommendations section of their final report the rationale for pursuing or not pursuing any of the explored activities.

3.2 *Exploration Grant – Municipal Cost Sharing Requirements*

At the exploration stage, municipalities are not expected to provide funding. However, they are expected to provide in-kind contributions (e.g. contributions of administrative staff time, meeting space, refreshments or meals for meetings, etc.) as municipal contributions toward exploration grant activities.

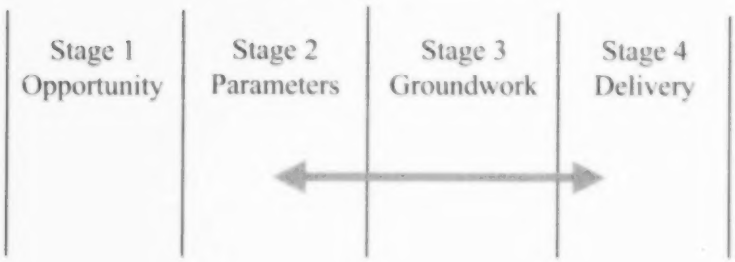
These in-kind contributions demonstrate a willingness on behalf of the partners to take the required first steps toward working together and pursuing regional cooperation.

4. IMPLEMENTATION GRANTS

4.1 *When Should a Municipal Partnership Apply for an Implementation Grant?*

Implementation grants are only available to municipalities that have completed approved Regional Partnerships Initiative **exploration** activities and wish to proceed **to further develop** or **implement projects or services** that are to be delivered on a regional basis. Implementation grants are typically considered for activities that occur in some or all of Stages 2, 3, and/or 4 of the partnership development process.

Figure 3
Implementation Activities
Partnership Development Stages



Implementation grants might be applied to the following types of groundwork-laying and initial project delivery activities:

- a review of cost-sharing models that can be applied in recovering the tax supported portion of delivery costs;
- a service delivery study designed to identify and assess various delivery models, some of which may involve non-government participants;
- a public consultation process to raise awareness of specific concerns and needs that need to be addressed in any new structure;

- a communications program to inform ratepayers and citizens of the service partnership and what it means;
- the development of contracts and agreements to formalize the structure and activities of the partnership;
- the development of terms of reference, bylaws and other guiding materials for any new service governance body that is created;
- the creation of an administrative body and of systems that are required to deliver the service;
- legal fees associated with the review of partnership structures and service delivery mechanisms; and
- preliminary delivery costs (e.g., a one-time grant for the set up of a regional partnership office, computers, etc.).

Implementation grants are one-time funding mechanisms. Implementation grants will not be provided on an annual basis to fund the on-going operating costs associated with a regional partnership service. Studies completed by the partnership in the exploration phase should make a business or improved service delivery case that is compelling enough to convince the municipal partners to value ongoing regional service delivery enough to invest municipal funds to support the operating costs.

4.2 Implementation Grant – Municipal Cost Sharing Requirements

At the implementation stage, municipalities are expected to provide a municipal investment of 25 percent of the total project costs, which includes verifiable in-kind contributions. The 25 percent municipal investment cannot be made up of grants obtained from other levels of government or provincial government ministries. This municipal investment is required to demonstrate the support and commitment of the partners for the regional partnership's activities.

4.3 Partnership Development Stage Overlap

Given that municipalities and partnerships are at varying stages within the partnership development process on any given regional opportunity or activity, the department recognizes that exploration and implementation stages can overlap. The suggested activities that fall into each category are not always exclusive to the one category, and depending on where in the partnership development process a partnership is at, a particular activity for one partnership may be funded under exploration while for another partnership that same type of activity may be funded under implementation. However, this will not normally be the case.

5. APPLICATION DEADLINES

Grant applications under this initiative can be submitted at any time. Once received, the application will be scheduled for review by grant policy staff and written comments on the application will usually be provided to the partnership within 45 days. A delay in Alberta Municipal Affairs' response may occur when activities concern the mandate of other provincial ministries, where the application will be forwarded to the affected ministry for comment. The written response will outline any areas where additional information or clarification is required. Applicants will be advised to revise applications prior to final review.

However, because of the end of the provincial fiscal year, there is the exception to the 45 –day response target. Applications received after January 30 in any given year will not be reviewed and approved prior to May 1 of that year.

6. CONDITIONAL GRANT AGREEMENT

6.1 Conditional Grant Agreement

The managing partner for a regional partnership which is successful in obtaining exploration or implementation grant funding must enter into a Conditional Grant Agreement with Alberta Municipal Affairs regarding the use of the grant before the funds can be released. The terms of the agreement will include the use of the grant for the approved activities only, the eligibility, reporting and accountability requirements, and the Minister's right to audit any grant activity, to publicize grant activities, and to require a refund of any grant funds not used in accordance with the agreement.

Full compliance with the Conditional Grant Agreement is required. Compliance includes meeting the project timing and project description conditions (the project description is detailed in Schedule A of the signed Conditional Grant Agreement), and conditions that apply after completion of the project. Failure to comply with the agreement may result in the regional partnership having to repay all or a portion of the grant.

6.2 Further Compliance Documentation

Reporting Criteria

If a regional partnership receives a grant, a final project report will be required within one month of completing the activities specified in the signed Conditional Grant Agreement. The **final report** should include the following:

- **a descriptive explanation** of each partnership activity, including key dates and resources utilized to conduct the work (including any contract expertise);
- **benefits realized** by each partner municipality and overall regional benefits;
- **outcomes** (including recommendations); and
- **anticipated uses and planned next steps**.

Partnerships will also be required to submit copies of substantive reports produced as a result of grant activities.

In some cases, depending on the size of the grant or the complexity of the activities, interim or status reports may be required. This requirement would be included as part of the Conditional Grant Agreement.

Financial Accounting

Financial statements itemizing the expenditures must be submitted within one month of completing the activities as specified in the signed Conditional Grant Agreement. The financial breakdowns must demonstrate a correlation to the established budget as specified in the Conditional Grant Agreement.

Review Engagement Report

If a regional partnership receives **a grant of more than $100,000**, a Review Engagement Report must be submitted to Alberta Municipal Affairs following the completion of the partnership's activities authorized under the signed Conditional Grant Agreement.

The Review Engagement Report requires the issuance of a report by an independent public accountant who is a member in good standing of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Alberta, the Certified General Accountants' Association of Alberta, or the Society of Management Accountants of Alberta, and who is not an employee of the managing municipal partner, or of any partner municipality involved in the Regional Partnership.

Income Earned Accounting

Regional partnerships may be asked to account for any or all of the income earned on all or a portion of the grant funds, including interest, dividends, etc. where significant time extensions, project changes, high grant amounts, or other circumstances warrant. Regional partnerships may be required to certify that the income earned has been accounted for and applied to the approved activities, if so advised by Regional Partnerships Initiative representatives for specific circumstances such as:

a) time extensions that exceed one year from the original activity completion date (i.e., complex or problem activities);

b) relatively large grant amounts (greater than $100,000);

c) significantly altered project description amendments have been approved where accounting for the income earned is a requirement of the amendment approval; or

d) other situations as specified from time to time by the ministry representatives.

Any requirement to account for income earned will be included in the Conditional Grant Agreement or an amendment to the Conditional Grant Agreement, depending on the situation.

6.3 *Follow-Up*

These Guidelines and the Conditional Grant Agreement both identify the conditions for Regional Partnerships Initiative funding. Provincial government accountability requirements dictate that ministry staff must ensure an acceptable level of partnership compliance with these conditions. Follow-up and collection procedures will be initiated to address any compliance problems that may occur.

If you feel these Guidelines do not address your particular partnership situation, please contact an advisor (contact information provided on page 2 of these Guidelines).

6.4 *Time Extension and Activity Amendment Requests*

A significant number of partnerships are requiring activity amendments and time extensions due to changes or delays. A number of partnerships have fallen behind schedule and are not able to complete their activities on time or as originally described.

Alberta Municipal Affairs accommodates reasonable changes and challenges where possible. However, to meet accountability and compliance conditions, regional partnerships requesting activity description changes or completion date extensions must submit a **written** request that includes, at minimum, the following information:

a) the funds expended as of the date of the request;

b) an explanation of, and reason for, the delay or the activity or project description change;

c) a revised implementation schedule or project timelines, including completion date, revised activities or components, and any other changes from the original proposal that are being requested;

d) a contingency plan to mitigate further delays; and

e) a listing of the contract and/or other resources that will be used to complete the activities.

Upon receipt of such a request, Regional Partnerships Initiative staff will submit the **written** amendment requests with recommendations to the Deputy Minister. Upon the Minister's or Deputy Minister's approval, an amending Conditional Grant Agreement will be prepared and forwarded to the managing partner for signature to process the requested changes.

APPENDICES

Appendix A – Sample Resolution – Exploration Grant

Regional Partnerships Initiative
Exploration Grant

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

1. "Be it resolved that Council authorizes _____ to
(Legal Status and Name of the Municipality)
participate in, and submit a Regional Partnerships Initiative Exploration grant application
for _____ under the Alberta
(Name of the Regional Partnership)
Municipal Affairs Regional Partnerships Initiative; further

2. That _____ agrees that
(Legal Status and Name of the Municipality)
_____ be designated the
*(Legal Status and Name of the **Managing** Municipality)*
managing partner of _____
(Name of the Regional Partnership)
for the purposes of receiving, administering, allocating, reporting, and accounting for the grant funds on behalf of the partners; and further

3. That the _____ agrees to enter into,
(Legal Status and Name of the Municipality)
a Conditional Grant Agreement governing the purpose and use of the exploration grant funds if it is the managing partner, or if not agrees to abide by the terms of a Conditional Grant Agreement signed by the managing partner on behalf of the other partner municipalities and/or approved participants governing the purpose and use of the exploration grant funds."

_____
Chief Elected Official or Signing
Officer Duly Authorized by Council

_____
Date

Regional Partnerships Initiative
Implementation Grant

COUNCIL RESOLUTION

1. "Be it resolved that Council authorizes _____ to
(Legal Status and Name of the Municipality)
participate in, and submit a Regional Partnerships Initiative Implementation grant application for _____ under the Alberta
(Name of the Regional Partnership)
Municipal Affairs Regional Partnerships Initiative; further

2. That _____ agrees to contribute
(Legal Status and Name of the Municipality)
$ _____ per capita towards the required 25 percent municipal financial contribution component of the implementation grant funding; further

3. That _____ agrees that
(Legal Status and Name of the Municipality)
_____ be designated the
(Legal Status and Name of the **Managing** Municipality)
managing partner of _____
(Name of the Regional Partnership)
for the purposes of receiving, administering, allocating, reporting, and accounting for the grant funds on behalf of the partners; and further

4. That the _____ agrees to enter into,
(Legal Status and Name of the Municipality)
a Conditional Grant Agreement governing the purpose and use of the implementation grant funds if it is the managing partner, or if not agrees to abide by the terms of a Conditional Grant Agreement signed by the managing partner on behalf of the other partner municipalities and/or approved participants governing the purpose and use of the implementation grant funds."

_____
Chief Elected Official or Signing Officer Duly Authorized by Council

_____
Date